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REMARKS:

Claims 1-14 are in the case and presented for consideration.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 11, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,519,309 to Van Swam.

Applicant respectfully traverses the examiner's rejection for the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 recites at least one limitation not taught or suggested by the cited prior art. Claim 1 recites:

a tube support bar for use between a pair of heat exchanger tubes, the support bar comprised of a first metallic strip attached to a second metallic strip at spaced intervals, the first strip having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than the second strip.

Applicant submits that Van Swam '309 fails to teach or suggest a "first strip having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than the second strip." Van Swam '309 discloses that a pair of strips of a "doublet" are typically made of zircaloy, and that both strips of the "doublet" can be made of zirconium alloy to alleviate bowing of both strips due to a corrosion reaction. Thus, Van Swam '309 does not teach or suggest that one strip of the doublet should be made of a different material than the other strip of the doublet. Hence, Van Swam '309 does not teach or suggest that one strip of the doublet has a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than the other strip of the doublet.

Applicant respectfully believes that the Office has misunderstood the Van Swam '309 patent. The Office first states that "the different materials of the first and second strips are taught in col. 3, lines 17-30, wherein it is suggested to use zirconium alloys for

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the underlying metal of the spacer strips; the one strip material is Zircaloy." This statement is inconsistent.

Van Swam '309 does suggest use of zirconium alloys instead of Zircaloy for the spacer strips. Van Swam '309 is referring to both strips of a "doublet" (e.g., see Fig. 1, doublet 40). Van Swam '309 states at col. 3, lines 17-20, "Reasons for the larger than expected growth or bow of the spacers are related to larger than expected growth or extension of the internal doublet strips that form the cells in some spacer designs." Van Swam '309 further states at col. 3, lines 28-30, "The growth or extension of the spacer strips due to these causes can be alleviated by the use of zirconium alloys with improved corrosion behavior. " [Emphasis Added]. Van Swam '309 is not referring to only one strip with respect to the problems of growth or extension. Reference is specifically made to "strips." Therefore, if both strips of a doublet are made of zirconium alloys to correct the problems of growth or extension, then one strip material cannot be Zircaloy as the Office suggests.

The Office further states, "Zircaloy or Zirconium alloys are different materials, one having a greater coefficient of thermal expansion over the other." Although Zircaloy or Zirconium alloys are different materials, the Van Swam '309 patent does not teach that one strip of a "doublet" is made of a different material than the other strip of the doublet. Van Swam '309 only discloses that both strips of a doublet can be made of zirconium alloy to overcome the problems of growth or extension which affect both strips. Furthermore, Van Swam '309 does not even discuss coefficients of thermal expansion.

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Finally, the Office states that "the strips (42, 46) are initially flat (SEE Figure 1) but the Zircaloy will bow at temperatures where zirconium alloys won't." Applicant notes that according to Van Swam '309, the bowing is due to a corrosion reaction (see col. 3, lines 17-30). There is no mention of temperature at all.

Accordingly, claim 1 is believed to be patentable. Claims 2, 5, 6, 11, and 12 depend from claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for the same reasons as stated above for claim 1.

Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious from Van Swam '309. The basis for the rejection is that claimed differences in size of the strips are only design choice. Applicant traverses the Office's rejection for the same reasons stated above for claim 1. Particularly, Van Swam '309 fails to teach or suggest a "first strip having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than the second strip."

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious from Van Swam '309. The Office argues that the choice of materials is one of design choice. Applicant reiterates that Van Swam '309 fails to teach or suggest a "first strip having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than the second strip," as explained above with regard to the claim 1 rejection.

Accordingly, the application and claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and favorable action is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

If any issues remain which may be resolved by telephonic communication, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the number below, if such

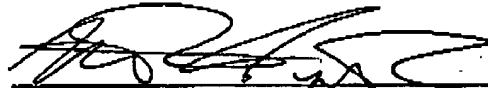
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will advance the application to allowance.

Favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. Seymour, Reg. No. 54,436
The Babcock & Wilcox Company
Patent Department
20 South Van Buren Avenue
Barberton, Ohio 44203
(330) 860-6605